

Greg Gerow and Joel Nolasco put support beams in place for the Heber Valley Historic Railroad depot in Heber.

JASON OLSON, DESERET NEWS

New Heber Creeper depot may be ready by end of May

Post-and-beam construction gets under way

3-4-01

By Gib Twyman

Deseret News staff writer

HEBER CITY — Watching workers sliding massive beams together easier than Tinkertoys, you get the idea this building might be something special.

Two ends notch snugly with a satisfying thunk.

"If it ain't tight, it ain't right,"

construction framer Shawn Crosland said.

Craig Lacey, executive director of the Heber Valley Historic Railroad, wanted the century-old "Heber Creeper" to have a brand-new depot that was both right and tight.

It's the centerpiece of a \$770,000 face-lift for the Creeper as it spruces up for its role ferrying Olympic patrons to Soldier Hollow, site of the 2002 biathlon/cross-country competition.

That is why the decision was made to go with the old-world craftsmanship of post-and-beam construction. Evolving from ancient shipbuilders and

adopted by pioneers, the process involves a few well-placed steel spikes, but mostly depends upon the nailless system of finely fitted notches and pegs.

"It's part of a look we hoped to create, in keeping with the Old West," Lacey said.

The post-and-beam pieces are milled on sophisticated, computer-driven saws by Euclid Timber Frames LC, Charleston, S.C.

"It's quite a process, watching these sophisticated saws turn these big beams, spin them all around and spit them out to per-

Please see **DEPOT** on B6



during a County Council meeting. Although council members disagree, most admit they haven't become angry at each

"These issues are very confusing because they are not ours; they belonged to the old commission. It makes it difficult to come down on one side or another."

The council, in fact, is doing whatever it can to distance itself from the decisions and rhetoric of the three-member county commission, even taking what could be called exaggerated steps to make clear to the public it doesn't sanction the old way of doing business.

Last week, it happened twice.

Acting as the Board of Equalization, the group declared in a resolution reiterating what everyone already knows: that this particular board had "no involvement in deliberations, negotiation or activities related to the offer of the settlement" issued by the prior board to Alliant.

An hour later, in a subsequent County Council meeting, members widened the gap some more.

They routinely voted to approve the minutes of two of its previous meetings. But when it came to the minutes of the Salt Lake County Commission meetings in December, the council merely "accepted" the minutes.

It was Bradley who insisted to the rest of the council the distinction be made.

"It's symbolic, I admit," he said. "There was a great deal of activity put through the commission in the last 30 days of the year, and many of those decisions were inappropriate and questionable at best. I was not willing to grant approval, but merely to say they exist and we accept them."

His colleagues went along with him with no arguments.

Unlikely kinship

Arguments, in fact, are rare among the County Council members. They disagree, debate and agree to disagree, but most admit they haven't been at this long enough to get angry at each other.

The duration of the civility and good manners has been a surprise to some.

"I've been impressed with how well the council has been able to work with each other," said Russell Skousen, a Republican. "We can debate the issues without making it personal. We can have vigorous debate in our meeting and then go

back to our offices and laugh joke with each other."

In fact, Skousen, arguably the most conservative of the council, has found an unlikely ally in Joe Hatch, a staunch Democrat.

"We don't agree ideologically," Skousen says. "I find Skousen one of the most interesting people on the council. He is very articulate with the way he expresses things. He makes a point of defending my views but he is so articulate on his."

Hatch, in turn, has forged a respect, and in many cases a friendship, with Skousen. "I have an agreement, of an unlikely but genuine, with conservatives on the council."

"He has a good legal mind and is able to talk through things. I find myself agreeing with some of the positions he's taken," Skousen said.

Fellow Republican Steve Harmsen said, "I'm in sync with Joe as much as I am with anybody."

Harmsen and Bradley have paired up in agreement on many issues, and both are among the most vocal in setting the tone at the council meetings that happen every Tuesday.

And while Bradley and Harmsen come from the same political

DEPOT

Continued from B1

fect specifications," said Ken McConnell, Creeper marketing director.

"The tolerances are down to 1 millimeter," Lacey said.

"The beams are warm-fit at our factory, then brought out here to refit together," Euclid worker Greg Gerow said.

With the post-and-beam construction getting under way Friday, the shoot-for completion date on the \$550,000, 5,400-square-foot depot is June 11. But things are going well enough that Lacey is hoping for a big-splash debut May 28, capping Memorial Day weekend.

The two 2,700-square-foot levels of the depot will house a gift shop, ticket office, administrative offices, food and supplies storage, restrooms, mini-museum and large lobby for patrons to wait on trains.

"That's the big emphasis, providing comfort and convenience for our customers," Lacey said.

That is why the tonier post-and-beam construction, encompassing two-thirds of the depot, covers the main customer waiting areas. The remainder of the building is conventional frame construction.

"We've needed something like this for so long. We had people call our customer areas 'Camp 6,' along the lines of Stalag 17," Lacey said.

A decrepit caboose and military-style building housed supplies.



Old-world craftsmanship is a prominent characteristic of the new Heber Creeper depot in Heber City. It is on track for completion in late May or early June.

Bathrooms were in a rented trailer. The ticket office was minuscule, as was a lean-to gift shed. A three-sided metal structure protected a few benches.

"But basically, on cold winter nights, folks would wait in their cars with the heaters on, then rush to the train when the whistle blew," Lacey said.

It was no way to run a railroad, amenitywise. Still, the Creeper has grown in popularity as customers were willing to brave the elements for the charm. Ridership has exploded on wintertime Polar Express rides, beginning with two trips and climbing to 30 last Christmas season, with the public clamoring for more.

"Now we'll be able to offer them a warm, spacious place to wait, with snacks, beverages and nice restrooms," Lacey said, adding the depot is air-conditioned for summer riders.

Quaintness remains as much a part of the new mix as function.

"We wanted something along the lines of a 1905 building. Our two steam engines were built in 1907 and our snack car in 1907," Lacey said.

The external construction is a wood composite, made to look instantly old.

"It's less expensive than wood, but it looks more like wood than wood and lasts longer," said Craig Heath, president and general manager of HECCO Inc., the Salt Lake general contractor for the depot.

The Creeper also was fortunate post-and-beam wound up fitting into its budget — largely because Euclid donated much of the work.

Financing for the depot included \$260,000 from the Utah Legislature, as part of an economic package that also helped build the new day

lodge at Soldier Hollow. Wasatch County matched the \$260,000. Another \$250,000 came from the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce. Heber City kicked in street resurfacing and curb-and-gutter work.

The money over and above depot construction includes refurbishments of a new 10-car "Movie Train," including the No. 75 steam engine, the Creeper purchased in 1999 from the estate of the late producer Everett Rohrer in Hudson, Colo.

Other money goes for Creeper property improvements, including a new parking area.

"No more trudging through the mud," Lacey said.

The Creeper is becoming an increasingly popular spot for train enthusiasts to contract for calendar-art and photo-essay shoots. Filmmaking is another rising revenue stream. Cintel Films is scheduled to start shooting "Yukon Express" in March, downtrack from the depot, and several other films are in negotiation.

"We're excited about all these prospects for the Creeper. We feel like the railroad will continue to grow as an attraction all of us along the Wasatch, and all of Utah, can be proud of," Lacey said.

But there's another fun, mental joy seeing the new station go up.

"What the new day is for us a home," Lacey said.

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JOHN OLSON, CREPER NEWS

in Salt Lake, Utah
901-565-1011

Routes 11 and 53 will follow State north to 400 South and resume their regular routes, north on State, at that point.

Routes 124 and 125 will follow State north to 500 South, go west on 500 South to West Temple, then north on West Temple to resume their regular routes.

Route 51 will follow State south to 200 South, turn west on 200 South to 400 West, south on 400 West to 500 South and west on 500 South to its regular route.

Call UTA customer service at 743-3882 (RIDE-UTA).

Rail projects coordinator

The only completed TRAX line runs from downtown Salt Lake City to Sandy. The University of Utah extension along 400 South is currently under construction.

West Valley City wants the third spur of the TRAX system, while

West Jordan, Draper and the Salt Lake International Airport may all be considered for extensions.

"One of the main reasons I decided to take on this responsibility is that West Valley leaders are serious about moving forward," Hawker said. "It is an enormously complex and challenging process to reach a day when the first rail is laid."

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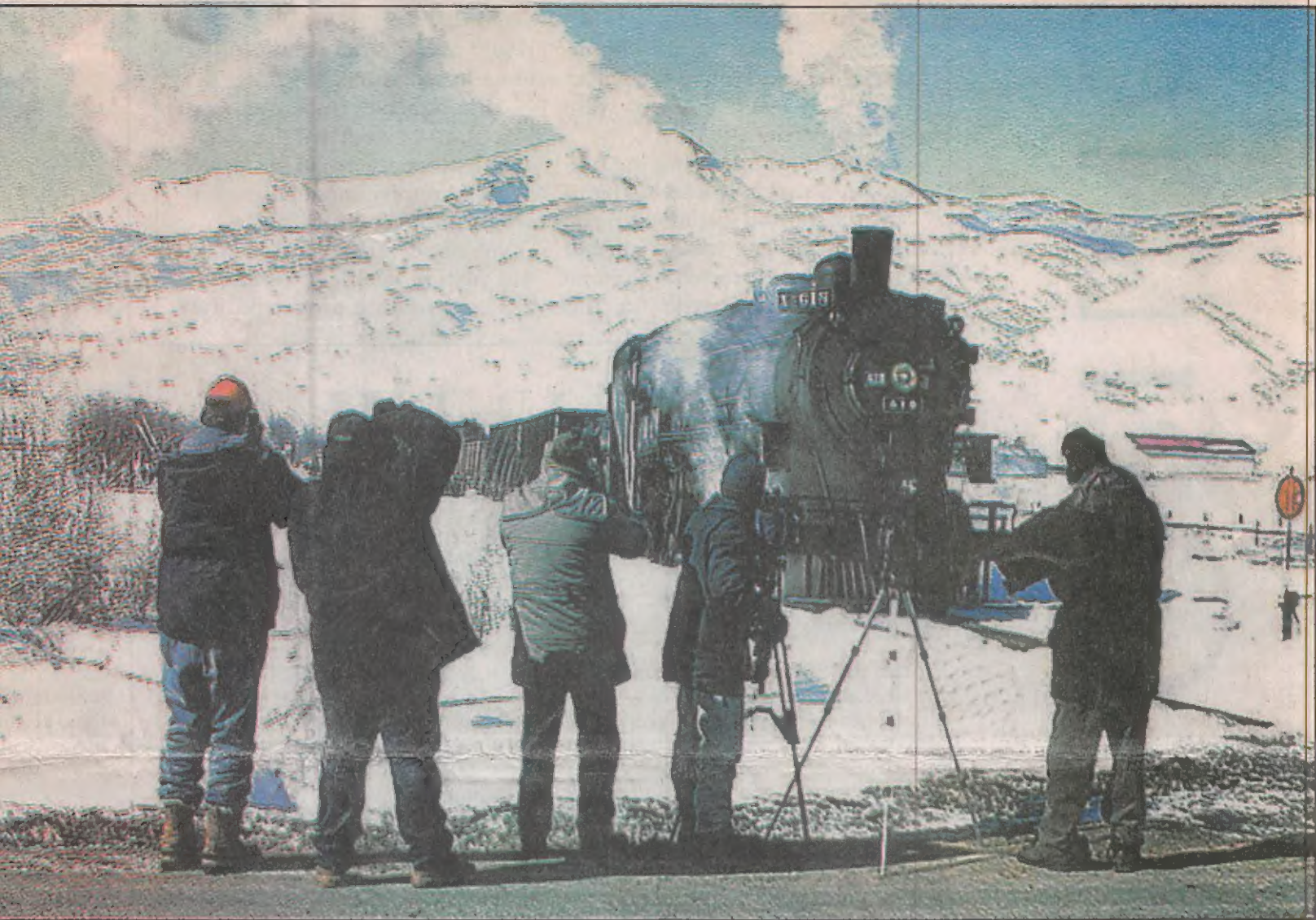
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Wave photo by Tish Dahmen

Picture Perfect

2-18-04

A group of train enthusiasts traveled from as far away as Europe to photograph the historic Heber Valley Railroad's steam engine and antique freight cars. While here they also learned to "drive the train" when they participated in the Engineer for a Day program.

BY TISH DAHMEN
Wave Editor

Thirty rail fans accompanied by their two tour guides visited here last week to photograph one of Heber Valley's greatest treasures — the Heber Valley Railroad steam engines and antique rail cars.

The amateur photographers came from as far away as Europe

to photograph the train. "Our goal is to take pictures of the train to make it look like they were shot 60 years ago," said Carl Franz, of Rockville, Md. Franz is the tour group's organizer.

Franz said this was the 100th Steam Photo Freight Train Special, but the first time one of his group's have toured in the

mountain west.

"This is our first trip west of the Mississippi. We generally photograph trains in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

What brought the group west? "The scenery out here in the winter is spectacular!" Franz enthused. He added that the railroad's collection of antique freight and passenger cars is also

a big attraction. "It's extremely unusual for a railroad to have this many vintage freight cars."

While here, members of the group took advantage of the railroad's customized Engineer for a Day program. The group took turns at the throttle of Steam Engine No. 618 on Friday, Feb. 13. They said of the experience: It was the "time of their lives."

OPINIO

The motel owner, Mahzar Tabesh, happens to be a minority; a Pakistan native, who immigrated to the United States in 1981. The last six years were spent in Heber City.

In the days following the fire, Tabesh claimed he and his family had been the victims of racial harassment. The family alleged they received threatening phone calls culminating with the fire

This sense of community is one of the things that makes the Heber Valley such an appealing place to call home.

Although our trust was misplaced as evident by the jury's decision, we are proud to say we, as a community, rose above accusations of racial profiling.

We hope this is a lesson in true justice. People must always be innocent until proven guilty.

Update on Utah House and Senate Activity

BY BOB WREN

Guest Commentary

After the fifth week of its annual 45 day session, a total of 75 pieces of legislation, of over 400 bills introduced, have been passed. Among these, a bill which "allows anyone to vote an absentee ballot either by mail or at the election officer's office" (HB9); and another which "prohibits a driver license certificate, a commercial driver license certificate, or an identification card from bearing an applicant's Social Security number" (SB 87).

A few resolutions were also passed such as "Legislative Support for Music and Other Fine Arts Programs in Public Schools, Urging Congress to Pass Social Security Retirement Account Legislation, and to Pass Lifetime and Retirement Savings Account Legislation.

SPECIAL ELECTION DATES (SB 115) which would restrict special elections (including bond elections) to the June Primary date and November General Election passed Senate 20-8-1 and House 47-21-7. This bill would eliminate those bond elections at off times when very few are voting.

Midterm replacement of legislators was passed by the Senate, to allow the respective political parties to recommend a single name to the governor as a

est standard in a court of law. It means if you are 50.01% sure the property was involved in a crime you may confiscate it. It is then the responsibility of the accused to prove he or his property is innocent."

H.B. 66 State Spending Limitations Amendments attempts to limit state government spending by a factor of population growth and inflation. It was passed by the House 51-18-6, with Snow and Ure in favor; it's scheduled for hearing by the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee this week.

Two abortion bills have been considered and passed. SB68 (Prohibition of Public Funding for Abortion) passed the Senate 22-6-1 on 1/23/04. An amended version passed the House 57-13-5 on 2/11/04. The Senate concurred with the amended version 21-7-1 on 2/13/04.

SB69 (Partial Birth Abortions) passed the Senate 25-3-1 on 1/26/04. (Sen.

SB 115 which would restrict special elections (including bond

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